# Barbarian Comparisons

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**Abstract**

When comparing two heroes, who both fought barbarians, Plutarch does not draw parallels between Greek and Roman campaigns. Instead, in the four pairs of *Parallel Lives* studied here (*Pyrrh.-Mar.*, *Them.-Cam.*, *Cim.-Luc.*, *Alex.-Caes.*), Plutarch broadens the significance of barbarian contact, allowing the barbarian enemy, the external Other, to draw attention to Hellenic traits of freedom, culture, and prudence in his heroes and in their cities, both Greek and Roman. Equally important, this Other serves to uncover traces of the barbarian in those same heroes and cities.

**Key-Words:** Barbarians, Hellenism, Themistocles, Camillus, Cimon, Lucullus, Alexander, Caesar, Pyrrhus, Marius, Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*.

It has long been recognized that the *Parallel Lives* do not set up a contrast or competition between civilized Greek heroes and barbarian Romans[1]. In fact, Plutarch never presents Romans as barbarians, but draws them into the Hellenic cultural sphere as partners in a civilizing mission. The *Parallel Lives* set Greek next to Roman, with the barbarians as a separate category[2]. A significant, and rather ironic, example occurs in *Pyrrhus*, when Pyrrhus makes his initial contact with Romans. Pyrrhus observes a Roman army drawn up for battle, and marvels, "This battle formation of the barbarians is not barbarian" (τάξις μέν . . . αὕτη τῶν βαρβάρων οὐ βάρβαρος, *Pyrrh*. 16.7). Thus Plutarch leads Pyrrhus to realize that the Romans were not barbarians[3].

1 Cf. e.g. C. Jones, 1971, pp. 124-25, T. Duff, 1999, pp. 304-5, Schmidt 1999, p. 8.

2 Note the entry *Barbarian Questions* in the Lamprias catalogue (139), an apparent companion to the extant *Greek* and *Roman Questions*.

3 Mossman, 2005, Buszard, 2005. In other lives, Plutarch exploits earlier, chiefly legendary contacts, such as Numa's with Pythagoras.

In fact, his narrative implies, the Romans could teach Pyrrhus a thing or too about being Greek. One vivid example is furnished by C. Fabricius, who is neither swayed by money nor terrified by the surprise appearance and trumpeting of an elephant (20.1-5). Moreover, when an admiring Pyrrhus urges Fabricius to return with him to Epirus, where he could be first among the king's comrades and generals, the Roman declines. His excuse is unexpected: he declines not because he wished to remain at Rome, but because it would be a bad deal for Pyrrhus:

> Those men who now hold you in honor and awe, if they were to become acquainted with me, would prefer to be ruled by me rather than by you.

Pyrrhus is not enraged: apparently he accepts Fabricius' words as in some measure true, despite their arrogance (20.8-10). In fact, the Roman possesses the qualities of a Greek sage[4]. The confrontation of Fabricius and Pyrrhus destabilizes the Greek/barbarian dichotomy: Pyrrhus himself appears less Greek than the Roman. Plutarch here judges a person's worth on inner qualities and virtuous behavior, not on ethnic background or native language. Rash and anti-social behavior could be seen as barbarian; calm, prudent, and temperate behavior as Hellenic and cultivated, the result of education or *paideia*[5]. Greek and Roman cultures merged, to create, in different degrees and at different times, a blended Greco-Roman world. Greeks and Romans would continue to define themselves against one another, but could unite in defining themselves against a barbarian Other. However, such self-definition in Plutarch's eyes was always subject to evaluation. Thomas S. Schmidt has shown how Plutarch used barbarian negative qualities to enhance his heroes' virtues. However, the biographer may also use these same qualities to demonstrate their weaknesses[6].

This paper will consider how Plutarch deploys his fundamental technique of parallel lives in combination with the category of barbarian to illuminate the behavior and moral stance of his heroes and their cities. In comparing heroes, Plutarch frequently chooses men who

4 This reading also explains Cinesias' report that the Roman senate seemed to him "a senate of many kings" (βασιλέων πολλῶν συνέδριον). MOSSMAN 2005, 509, sees this as a "back-handed compliment", since Romans hated kings. But I suspect that Plutarch thinks rather of the Platonic kingship of the virtuous: the Roman senators had a dignity and simplicity which separated them from the norm. Cf. Pericles' "aristocratic and kingly (βασιλικήν) government" (*Per*. 15.1).

5 Cf. PELLING 1989, SWAIN 1990.

6 SCHMIDT, 1999, 311-14, recognizes the portrait of Crassus as an exception. Cf. also NIKOLAIDIS, 1986.

have had to respond to barbarian attacks or have attempted to conquer barbarians. But does he expect us to see parallels? Are his portraits of his protagonists enriched by the resonance between their diverse barbarian confrontations?[7]

On the face of it, no. The worlds are different, the actors dissimilar, the problems faced distinctive. Consider the pair *Themistocles-Camillus*. The Persians represented an enormous multi-national empire with a long-term policy of expansion; the Gauls faced by Camillus are a relatively small tribe looking for a place to settle. The Persians have interacted with Greek cities for decades and subjected many of them; the Gallic attack is sudden, and not initially directed at Rome. Themistocles builds a navy and by his victory in a great sea-battle allows the Athenians to reclaim their city[8], the Romans fight on land and finally defeat the Gauls only after the barbarians have withdrawn from the city. The account of the battle of Salamis occupies three chapters (*Them*. 13-15), more if we consider the preliminaries; Camillus' battle on the via Gabina is dispatched in a few lines (*Cam*. 29.6)[9]. There are numerous obstacles to exploiting a comparison of this sort.

Nevertheless, I believe Plutarch was able to develop parallels and contrasts regarding barbarians in ways as diverse as the lives themselves. I will take as test cases three pairs. Two of these, *Themistocles-Camillus* and *Alexander-Caesar*, lack the usual epilogue offering a comparison or syncrisis[10]. The syncrisis of the third pair, *Cimon-Lucullus*, offers little help, but the prologue touches themes relevant to this inquiry, as shall be shown, as does the first chapter of *Themistocles*. A useful element in my analysis will be the presence of the word βάρβαρος or its cognates in these lives. Not that Plutarch's references to barbarians or barbarisms of various sorts are coextensive with his use of the Greek term, but attention to that term permits a more restricted focus, and alerts the reader to interpretations not otherwise apparent.

7 Pairs of *Lives* in which barbarians are particularly prominent: *Them.-Cam*., *Arist.-CMaj*., *Cim.-Luc.*, *Nic.-Crass*., *Ages.-Pomp*., *Pyr.-Mar*., and *Alex.-Caes*. This is not the place to consider Plutarch's typology of different barbarians, such as Persians, Medes, Parthians, Armenians, Egyptians, Mauretanians, Celtiberians, Celts, Gauls, Germans, Britons, etc.

8 Plutarch gives Themistocles no role in the battle of Plataea.

9 In this he is similar to Livy, V 49.6.

10 The question whether these epilogues were ever written is vexed: see recently Duff, 2011, 259; Pelling, 2011, 32-33 (purposeful omission, at least for *Alexander-Caesar*). On prologues or proemial openings, see Duff, 2011, 216-42, esp. 216-24. Note that the end of *Alexander* probably and the beginning of *Caesar* certainly have been lost.

1. *Themistocles and Camillus*

*Themistocles*

The first chapter of *Themistocles*, in which we are told that Themistocles restored the telesterion at Phlya, which had been burnt by the "barbarians" (1.4), immediately indicates the threat that barbarians would present to the protagonist and alerts the reader to the destruction that the barbarian invasion brought[11]. Throughout the greater part of the life, Plutarch will continue to speak of the invaders as "the barbarians" rather than Persians[12]. Chronologically Themistocles' preoccupation with the barbarians begins with Miltiades' victory at Marathon, which he recognizes will only lead to greater conflicts (3.4-5). It gradually builds as Xerxes advances, until it reaches its high point in the confrontation with Xerxes and his fleet at Salamis, highlighted in Plutarch by the reference to Simonides' description of the victory, "No more brilliant naval action has been achieved by either Greeks or barbarians": οὔθ Ἕλλησιν οὔτε βαρβάροις ἐνάλιον ἔργον εἴργασται λαμπρότερον (15.3, F 5 West).

Two incidents mark the sharp line which Themistocles drew between barbarians and Greeks as they confronted each other and the fierce opposition he championed. When an interpreter came from the King to ask for earth and water, Themistocles moved that he be executed, for «having dared to use the Greek language to convey barbarian demands». In addition, according to Plutarch, he moved that Arthmios of Zelea, together with his children and descendants, be deprived of their rights, for having brought Median gold to Athens (*Them*. 6.3-4)[13]. It appears that Themistocles was relentlessly hostile to the barbarians.

Yet Plutarch destabilizes this neat dichotomy from the very beginning, where he reports that Themistocles himself was only half Greek, his mother being variously remembered as Thracian or Carian (*Them*. 1.1-2)[14]. At Salamis, Themistocles employed a Persian, Sicinnus, to work his trick on Xerxes[15].

11 DUFF, 2008, makes a number of excellent observation on this opening paragraph, but does not discuss the points I make here and in the following paragraph.

12 In the same way, Plutarch speaks of the King, or Xerxes, but not the Persian king.

13 The interpreter's crime: ὅτι φωνὴν Ἑλληνίδα βαρβάροις προστάγμασιν ἐτόλμησε χρῆσαι. The chiastic order places Greeks and barbarians in sharp confrontation. For the controversy surrounding the case of Arthmios, see R. MEIGGS, 1972, 508-12 and C. HABICHT, 1961, 18-19, 23-25.

14 Plutarch cites an epigram, Phanias of Eresos, and Neanthes. This barbarian mother is notably absent from Herodotus' introduction of Themistocles at 7.143. Nepos *Them*. 1.2 says his mother was an Acarnanian citizen, possibly a corruption of Carian.

15 *Them*. 12.4: ἦν δὲ τῷ μὲν γένει Πέρσης ὁ Σίκιννος αἰχμάλωτος, εὔνους δὲ τῷ Θεμιστοκλεῖ καὶ τῶν τέκνων αὐτοῦ παιδαγωγός.

The tricks by which he deceived Xerxes, both at Salamis and later during the Persian retreat, could equally be taken as attempts to aid the barbarian, as Themistocles himself suggested when he came to the Persian court (28.2). So Themistocles was a Greek, but also a bit barbarian. He tricked Xerxes, but also helped him. The barbarian-Greek contrast is unstable, even for Greece's great hero. Perhaps for this reason, Plutarch changes terminology when narrating Themistocles' flight to Asia. The Persians then are no longer *barbaroi*, but *Persai*. Themistocles says he has been a benefactor to the *Persai*, meets with the *Persian* king, and learns the *Persian* language[16]. It is only when his hero is threatened by a disgruntled satrap that Plutarch shifts register and refers to the satrap as ὁ βάρβαρος. Finally, Themistocles dies not from the barbarian envy (τὸν φθόνον τῶν βαρβάρων, 31.2) that he had feared, but from the conflict between the Persian king's orders to fight against the Greeks (τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἐξάπτεσθαι 31.4) and his own sense of honor and respect for his victories (31.5). Themistocles was a great Greek hero for his recognition of the barbarian danger and his ability to force a battle under favorable conditions, and so keep Greece free, but was rejected by his own and forced to live in an alien culture --which it seems, was not so alien after all.

*Camillus*: Plutarch on Gauls and Romans at Clusium

Just as significantly, Plutarch's account of the Gallic threat to Rome in *Camillus* challenges the neat dichotomy barbarian-civilized. An example is his account of the Roman embassy to the Gauls who were threatening Clusium (*Cam*. 17.1-5), an embassy which would become the proximate cause of the Gallic capture of Rome. The Gauls received the Romans courteously (φιλανθρώπως), but laughed off the Roman request for an explanation of why they felt they had been wronged. Plutarch quotes the extraordinary response of their king, Brennus, in extended direct discourse.

> The Clusians wrong us, because they although they are able to till a small land area, they think they should possess more, and are unwilling to share it with us, who are foreigners, numerous, and poor (17.3).

Livy gives a similar argument to the Gauls (5.36.3): the Clusians have more than they need, and the invaders are willing to fight for their land. But in Plutarch, Brennus goes on to assert that the Romans act in a similar fashion.

> In the same way the people of Alba and of Fidenae and of Ardea wronged you, Romans, and now the people of Veii, of Capena, and many of the Faliscans and

[16] Benefactor: *Them*. 28.2, 4; the King: 28.6; the Persian language (τὴν Περσίδα γλῶτταν ἀποχρώντως ἐκμαθών): 29.5.

> Volscians. If these cities do not share their wealth with you, you enslave them, plunder them, and destroy their cities. Nor do you do anything strange or unjust, but you are observing the most ancient of laws, which gives to the strong the goods of the weak, beginning from god down to the beasts. In fact, this is a fact of nature, that the strong seek to have more than the weak. So stop sympathizing with the besieged Clusians--you might teach the Gauls to be noble and sympathetic to those who are wronged by the Romans. (17.4-5)[17].

Plutarch has the Gallic leader echo two fifth century historians. The idea of reciprocal injustice recalls Herodotus' account of intercontinental rapes as prelude to the Trojan and ultimately Persian wars (Hdt., I 1-4), while the rule of the strong reflects Thucydides' report of the Athenians' speech at Sparta, reinforced by their reply to the Melians (I 76.2, V 105.1-2). Brennus the barbarian is referencing Hellenic wisdom, doubly cutting because both Greek models suggest a Realpolitik far removed from Plutarch's idea of virtuous action. In closing, Brennus suggests that the Gauls, acting as good and pious men, might even decide to defend those who suffer from Roman aggression.

The blend of hard truths and irony recalls the words of Tacitus' Calgacus (*Agr*. 30-32), but the literary echoes place the speech also in a Hellenic context, though not one of philosophical *paideia*. The Romans at this point in the story cannot be compared simply to the freedom-loving Greeks repelling the Persian invader. Livy, when introducing the scene, had noted that the legates had acted more like Gauls than Romans[18]. Plutarch, giving Brennus this speech, chose a different way to point the issue of the Romans' barbarian behavior. Moreover, in Plutarch, the Romans' violation of their own religious practices is an additional weakness. Plutarch alone among our sources introduces the role of the Fetiales in regard to the Roman legation's violation of the law, and also recalls Numa's establishment of that priesthood as guarantor, either to maintain peace or to declare a just war

[17] Brennus' speech refers to the earlier conquests of Alba and Fidenae mentioned by Plutarch in *Romulus* (Ardea only appears in Plutarch later in *Camillus* 23.2 ff. as Camillus' place of exile). Plutarch had referred to the other cities earlier in this life (*Cam*. 2, with more on the Volsci in later chapters). These cities are not named in our other sources for this episode: Plutarch has brought them into this speech from his earlier chapters. I consider it likely that Plutarch has invented this part of the speech, although he may of course have derived it from an earlier historian. It is not in Diodorus, XIV 113-4 or what we have of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, XIII 11-12.

[18] Liv., V 36.1: *Mitis legatio, ni praeferoces legatos Gallisque magis quam Romanis similes habuisset*.

(18.1-3). In the fury of the moment, the Romans have pushed aside the good practices they had for declaring war. Later, Plutarch stresses the lack of proper religious ritual and the confusion caused by multiple commanders as the Romans prepare to meet the Gauls in battle (18.5). The following disaster at the Allia river will leave the city open to the invader (18.6-8). His narrative, by highlighting the Romans' irrationality and their contempt for religious practice, suggests that, in a sense, they act like barbarians[19].

The fall of Rome to the Gauls, like the fall of Athens to the Persians, was an epochal event. Plutarch goes out of his way to highlight by a series of digressions and vignettes the significance of the Roman defeat and the barbarian capture of Rome. There is a chapter-long account of other unlucky days in Greek and Roman history (19), followed by the narrative of the dramatic flight of refugees from the city, with special digressions on the Vestal fire (20.3-8) and the story of Lucius Albinus' aid to the Vestals (21.1-3), then the scene of the old senators taking their place in the forum (21.4), and finally the cautious estimate of the date of the fall of Rome and the dim echoes of the disaster which reached Greece (22.2-4). Rome's fall marks a crisis point in Roman history, he insists, just as Athens' capture did, and like Herodotus, who had given an archon date to Athens' fall (Calliades, Hdt., VIII 51.1), Plutarch fixes the year of the defeat at the Allia[20]. Both are seen as critical moments for Hellenic and Roman identity. Camillus appears as a savior of civilization, as Themistocles had been.

If the Gallic attack and victory at the Allia were brought on by Roman insolence, incompetence, and irreligion, all characteristics incompatible with Hellenic *paideia*, Plutarch nevertheless also preserves moments which establish the dignity and nobility of the Romans and the savagery of the Gauls. Note especially that unforgettable scene of the priests and the elderly consulars and triumphators, garbed in their ceremonial dress, awaiting the invaders in the forum, in an extraordinary act of *devotio* (καθιεροῦντες, 21.4)[21]. When the Gauls confront these men, they are in awe. One gently (πρᾴως) touches Papirius' cheek, then plucks his beard --and receives a whack on the head from Papirius' staff. Suddenly, the tone shifts: the barbarian--for thus Plutarch now calls him, ὁ βάρβαρος - draws his sword and runs

19 Camillus is absent from the battle of the Allia, but his leadership and his unjust exile are recalled by the Romans immediately before the battle (18.7).

20 In *Themistocles*, the fall of Athens is not dated, presumably to avoid too close a parallel to Herodotus.

21 Livy, V 41.1-3 has the old men go each to his own house, but Plutarch imagines them in the forum (ἐν ἀγορᾷ).

the old man through. Then all hell breaks loose. At once the Gauls enact at Rome what all fear of barbarians: killing, plundering, burning, with no distinction of men or women, young or old (22.7-8).

Only with the arrival of Camillus on the scene, first at Ardea then at Rome, can the Gauls be put in their place and made to retire in confusion (23, 29). The Romans' wrongful behavior at Clusium and the Allia provides a foil for the exemplary actions of Camillus, who will impress all by his prudence and nobility (e.g., 24.4, εὐλαβείας καὶ καλοκαγαθίας, cf. his μετριότης and φρόνησις at 1.4.). Camillus appears as a twofold savior: one who would observe proper religious ritual and who as dictator would lead with intelligence rather than emotion. His calm, prudent demeanor marks him as imbued with the spirit of Hellenic *paideia*. When thirteen years later the Gauls attempt to return in greater numbers, Camillus' tactical genius again defeats them (40-41.6). Finally the Romans are liberated from their fear and thanks to their victory gain a firm confidence regarding their barbarian opponent[22].

What then can we say about barbarians in the comparative rhetoric of these two lives? Both show barbarians capturing and sacking Athens and Rome, the centers of Greco-Roman civilization, of Hellenicity, if you will. Yet in both lives Plutarch includes items which weaken the opposition barbarian-civilized. Themistocles is half-barbarian, uncultured, and takes refuge among the barbarians. The Romans appear as aggressive and irreligious. Both heroes are driven from their cities by irrational political forces which do not respect their good qualities. Themistocles was rejected for his pride in his accomplishment, yet it was this same pride which forbade him from returning to Greece as the leader of a barbarian army and an enemy to his people[23]. Camillus was forced into exile by envy: the echo of Achilles' withdrawal and recall supplies a strong Hellenic resonance to the Roman story[24]. Neither city appears as the peaceful, harmonious polity envisioned in *Precepts for Politicians*.

Yet each city also demonstrates moments of nobility, and their victories laid the groundwork for future growth. The barbarian attacks in fact strengthened

22 *Cam*. 41.7: βέβαιον ἐξ αὐτῆς φρόνημα κατὰ τῶν Κελτῶν ἐγγενέσθαι Ῥωμαίοις.

23 The double ending to the life, speaking of Themistocles' supposed tomb (or cenotaph) in Piraeus and of his descendant and Plutarch's friend Themistocles (*Them*. 32.5-6), suggests a spiritual, if not physical, return to Athens.

24 Cf. *Cam*. 12.3: οὐκ ἀνασχόμενος ἔγνω μεταστῆναι καὶ φυγεῖν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως πρὸς ὀργήν, and 13.1, Ἐκεῖνος μὲν οὖν ὥσπερ ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς ἀρὰς θέμενος ἐπὶ τοὺς πολίτας..., with Homer, *Il*. 1.240-44, 338-44.

the cities that suffered it. Without Themistocles' navy and walls, Athens could not have acquired its empire; without Camillus' defeat of the Gauls, he would not have had the stature to resolve the claims of patricians and plebeians, an essential step in Rome's rise to power.

In both lives, the barbarian attack reveals the underlying tension between Hellenic ideals and the lower passions that Plutarch associated with barbarism. In this pair the apparently clear categories of barbarian and civilized are questioned and become objects of irony, without being rejected or made meaningless. In both cases Plutarch asks us to look beyond labels to behavior, attitudes, and values. Apart from the two cities' fall to the barbarians and their subsequent rescue, there are no direct parallels, but the issues raised by the barbarian attack are similar.

2. *Cimon-Lucullus*

The unique preface to the second pair to be examined, *Cimon* and *Lucullus*, dramatically introduces themes of external and internal conflict at Chaeronea which similarly suggest the uncertainty of the barbarian/civilized distinction (*Cim*. 1-2)[25]. The story starts with the invasion of Boeotia by the original Greek settlers, Peripoltas and his family, who drove the barbarians out of Chaeronea, but then were largely wiped out during the successive barbarian invasions of the Persians in 480-79 and the Gauls in 279 (*Cim*. 1.1-2). Another crisis then arose as a result of the Roman presence at the time of Sulla. Peripoltas' descendant Damon, though a Greek of ancient lineage, was "uneducated and unyielding in temperament" (ἀπαίδευτος καὶ σκληρὸς τὸ ἦθος, 1.2). The Roman officer who desired him, despite the fact that the young man had recently passed the age for boy love[26], threatened to resort to rape to satisfy his passion. Damon reacted with violence, killing first the Roman, then the Chaeronean town council.The citizens tricked the young outlaw with "talks and decrees full of good will", and he was killed[27]. Hoping to gain an advantage over a rival city, the people of Orchomenos then denounced Chaeronea to the Romans, and only the testimony of Lucullus, who had investigated the matter at the time, averted complete disaster. In this preface, who is barbarian, who civilized? Both Greek and Roman act

25 On the interpretation of this preface, cf. Ma, 1994 and Beck, 2007.

26 *Cim*. 1.3: ἄρτι τὴν παιδικὴν ἡλικίαν παρηλλαχότος.

27 The whole sentence, *Cim*. 1.7, is quite dramatic: τὸν δὲ Δάμωνα λῃστείαις καὶ καταδρομαῖς πορθοῦντα τὴν χώραν καὶ τῇ πόλει προσκείμενον ὑπηγάγοντο πρεσβείαις καὶ ψηφίσμασι φιλανθρώποις οἱ πολῖται, κατελθόντα δὲ γυμνασίαρχον κατέστησαν· εἶτ᾽ ἀλειφόμενον ἐν τῷ πυριατηρίῳ διέφθειραν.

with passion, and Damon, the Greek at the center of the piece, is explicitly identified as lacking the *paideia* which ideally defined Greekness[28]. The Chaeroneans hide their murderous intentions with gentle (φιλανθρώποις) words. When Plutarch begins his narrative, then, with the assertion that both Cimon and Lucullus were brilliant warriors against the barbarians, but mild (πρᾷοι) in internal politics[29], he directs us to a theme already foreshadowed in the preface, the potential for barbarian behavior even in the heart of Greco-Roman society and the need for civilized, 'Hellenic', restraint.

Cimon, like Themistocles, had a Thracian mother[30], and like him, lacked a good Greek education. Stesimbrotus reported that "he was never taught any of the subjects usually studied by free men of Greece, such as music" (4.5, *FGrHist* 107F4)[31]. One might almost say he was a barbarian, although Plutarch prefers to suggest that he had a Peloponnesian directness, rather like Heracles. But Plutarch also contrasts his mild ways with Pausanias' behavior toward the Aegean cities. The Spartan commander enraged the allies by his arrogance, his attempt to betray Greece to "the barbarians", and most dramatically, his murder of a Greek girl of noble birth, Cleonike, whom he had forced to come to his bedroom (*Cim*. 6.2-7): acts which make Pausanias appear more barbarian than Greek. Cimon's mildness stood in sharp contrast. Moreover, Cimon's campaign led to many victories against the barbarians, culminating in his extraordinary double triumph on land and sea at the Eurymedon river (*Cim*. 12-13). These campaigns permitted him to keep Persian forces far from the Aegean coast and bring back enormous wealth to Athens. His political struggle with Pericles led to his ostracism, but soon his absence was felt and he was recalled, negotiated a peace between Sparta and Athens, and redirected the Athenians' energy against their "natural enemies", the "barbarians" (τῶν φύσει πολεμίων ... βάρβαροι), whose wealth it was only right to plunder for Greece (18.1). After reporting Cimon's death at Cyprus, Plutarch reminds the reader of two points: first, his unmatched

28 He also possesses ψυχῆς φρόνημα (1.2), often taken in a bad sense as a barbarian trait (cf. SCHMIDT, 1999, 80).

29 *Cim*. 3.1.

30 *Cim*. 4.1. For an interpretation of the importance of Cimon's Thracian connection, cf. FUSCAGNI, 1989, 92-101.

31 This report seems to be contradicted by Ion of Chios, who contrasted Pericles' haughtiness with Cimon's "tact, informality, and refinement in society" (ἐμμελὲς καὶ ὑγρὸν καὶ μεμουσωμένον ἐν ταῖς περιφοραῖς, *Per*. 5.3, *FGrHist* 392F15). Apparently both Cimon and Ion enjoyed good parties.

success against the barbarians and second, the indescribable ruin (φθόρον ἀμύθητον) that the hostility among the Greek states, which Cimon had tried to remove, brought to Greece. This ruin followed not only immediately after his death, but also in the fourth century. After the peace of Antalcidas, Plutarch laments, Persian tax collectors (φορολόγους) operated in Greek cities where previously not even a messenger (γραμματοφόρος) would have dared set foot (19.3-4, with a nice play on φόρος).

In Plutarch's mind, the necessity to control the arrogance and violence often associated with barbarian behavior unifies Cimon's twofold activity: one facet is the peacekeeping which sought to ease the rivalries of Athens and Sparta within Greece and of popular and elite factions in Athens, the other the brilliant military campaigns which humiliated the external enemy, barbarian Persia, and kept him from the sea (13.4). The struggle of Chaeronea under Roman domination to preserve itself against both external and internal barbarity is reflected in Cimon's effort to deflect violence from fellow Greeks and direct it toward «a natural enemy.»

*Lucullus*

Lucullus' act of civility in protecting Chaeronea after an outburst of 'barbarian' violence, in Plutarch's estimation, confirms his virtues in war and at home. Like Cimon, he directs Roman energy away from internal wars and outward against the Asiatic 'barbarians' of his own day, Mithridates and Tigranes, and then on his return to Rome, he refuses to contest Pompey for primacy (1.6). However, differently from Cimon, he loved liberal education as a young man (τὴν ἐμμελῆ ταύτην καὶ λεγομένην ἐλευθέριον ἐπὶ τῷ καλῷ προσεποιεῖτο παιδείαν) and after his wars he relaxed with philosophy (1.5-6)[32].

But of course, the picture is not so clear, nor so positive. It is true that Lucullus did defeat the barbarian army of Tigranes (τὸ βαρβαρικὸν στρατεῦμα, 27.5, cf. 35.6). Plutarch offers an impressive list, resembling those of Herodotus, of barbarian peoples in that army and numbers their variously armed troops, citing Lucullus' dispatch to the senate (26.3-7)[33]. Lucullus' Asian opponents made a good parallel to the great King's armies which Cimon had opposed, but unlike Cimon, Lucullus as

[32] Lucullus even wrote a history of the Marsian war in Greek: *Cim*. 1.8, cf. Cic., *Ad Att.* 1.19.10.

[33] There would have been some Greeks present as well, since Tigranes had brought together both Greeks and barbarians to populate his new city of Tigranocerta (26.1, cf. 27.1, 29.3 and 5). Plutarch remarks that the victory led Crassus later to foolishly suppose that Lucullus had demonstrated that "the barbarians" were easy spoil, and so decide to attack the Parthians (*Cim*. 36.6).

general faced the determined opposition of rebellious soldiers. His arrogant temperament rejected any attempt to please his soldiers, or indeed most anyone --the very opposite of Cimon's easy manner--and thus he found it impossible to win his troops over to himself (33.2, 36.5). Plutarch certainly saw Lucullus' harshness and lack of *philanthropia* in this regard as an un-Hellenic weakness[34].

Lucullus, on his return to Rome, sensibly refused to contest political primacy with Pompey, but still attempted with others to block Pompey's eastern settlement, thus provoking the creation of the triumvirate. Moreover, his renunciation did not free him from barbarian vices, exemplified for Plutarch in the incredible luxury with which he surrounded himself, "worthy of a satrap" (σατραπικήν, *Comp*. 1.5). Lucullus treats his wealth arrogantly, Plutarch writes, as if it were a captive barbarian (ὑβριστικῶς ἐχρῆτο τῷ πλούτῳ καθάπερ ὄντως αἰχμαλώτῳ καὶ βαρβάρῳ, 41.7). And it is indeed that, for it is wealth looted from barbarians. Lucullus did have one redeeming Hellenic feature, as has often been noted: he shared his excellent library with all comers, so that it seemed a sort of residence of the Muses (Μουσῶν τι καταγώγιον, 42.1), the "hearth and Greek prytaneum" (ἑστία καὶ πρυτανεῖον Ἑλληνικὸν, 42.2) for all visiting Rome[35].

In this pair the barbarians fight as part of empires and kingdoms, and are only beaten back, not completely defeated. Cimon was able to establish for a time an inland boundary which the Persians dared not cross, and Lucullus thrust Roman armies farther than they had ever gone. Cimon prepared the ground for Alexander, Lucullus for Pompey. Equally impressive for both men was the enormous quantity of loot they each brought back from their victories, and the pacific stance they took at home. Lucullus wins approval for being well educated according to the best Greek training, but criticism for his inability to manage his soldiers. Acknowledging that both were victorious against the barbarians, in the *Comparison* Plutarch evaluates the men especially by how well--that is,

34 *Luc*. 33.2: τῶν δ' αἰτιῶν αὐτὸς οὐχὶ τὴν ἐλαχίστην εἰς τοῦτο παρέσχεν, οὐκ ὢν θεραπευτικὸς πλήθους στρατιωτικοῦ, καὶ πᾶν τὸ πρὸς ἡδονὴν τοῦ ἀρχομένου γινόμενον ἀρχῆς ἀτιμίαν καὶ κατάλυσιν ἡγούμενος· τὸ δὲ μέγιστον, οὐδὲ τοῖς δυνατοῖς καὶ ἰσοτίμοις εὐάρμοστος εἶναι πεφυκώς, ἀλλὰ πάντων καταφρονῶν καὶ μηδενὸς ἀξίους πρὸς αὑτὸν ἡγούμενος. On the other hand, Plutarch commends Lucullus' justice and humanity (*philanthropia*) toward the barbarians after the fall of Tigranocerta, *Luc*. 29.6.

35 *Luc*. 42.1-2: ἀνειμένων πᾶσι τῶν βιβλιοθηκῶν, καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτὰς περιπάτων καὶ σχολαστηρίων ἀκωλύτως ὑποδεχομένων τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ὥσπερ εἰς Μουσῶν τι καταγώγιον ἐκεῖσε φοιτῶντας . . . καὶ ὅλως ἑστία καὶ πρυτανεῖον Ἑλληνικὸν ὁ οἶκος ἦν αὐτοῦ τοῖς ἀφικνουμένοις εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην.

how much in accordance with civic and moral values--they used those barbarian riches (*Comp*. 1.5). He praises Cimon's public benefactions while condemning Lucullus' conspicuous luxury. In both lives Plutarch seems pleased to see the barbarian king humbled, but he employs his heroes' victories over the barbarians to reveal the two men's moral strengths and weaknesses.

3. *Alexander and Caesar*

*Alexander*

While it goes without saying that both Alexander and Caesar were enormously successful in their campaigns against barbarians, the function of barbarians in the two lives and especially the parallels between the campaigns is harder to define, nor is there a final comparison to indicate special issues. The *Alexander* offers a complex picture. If we follow Plutarch's use of *barbaros* (the word appears some 41 times in the life), several nodes of interest surface. The great moments, as we might expect, are the battles of the Granicus, Issus, and Gaugamela, and in each case Plutarch speaks of Alexander's opponents not as Persians, but as *barbaroi*[36]. The final great struggle occurs in India, where Alexander, caught inside the Mallian town, is almost killed. In the whole vivid description of Alexander's mortal danger, his opponents are four times *barbaroi*, but never Mallians. Twice, at the Granicus and among the Mallians, he risks being killed by a barbarian weapon (*Alex*. 16.10, 63.9). Plutarch's insistence on calling Alexander's enemies *barbaroi* confirms Alexander's position as champion of Hellenicity, even though Greek independence had been lost to the Macedonians at Chaeronea.

And yet barbarian influences powerfully shaped the Macedonian, especially in his final years. Alexander's claims of a divine father are tinged with the exotic: early in the life Plutarch associates Olympias' "more barbaric" (βαρβαρικώτερον) Dionysiac rites with the story of a divine serpentine lover, putative father of Alexander (*Alex*. 2.9). Later Ammon's oracle may have been merely a barbarian priest's garbled Greek greeting, ὦ παῖ δίος for ὦ παιδίον (7.9). More significant to both Greeks and Macedonians was his adoption of barbarian clothing (τὴν βαρβαρικὴν στολήν) and customs, although he rejected Median costume as being "completely barbarous and alien (παντάπασι βαρβαρικὴν καὶ ἀλλόκοτον, 45.1-2)"[37]. His comrades' fear that he had forgotten his Hellenic origins and his occasional favoring of barbarians

[36] Alexander against the *barbaroi*: northern tribes: *Alex*. 11.2, 3, 5; against the Persians, Granicus: 16.10, 15, 18; Issus: 20.8, 11; Gaugamela: 31.10, 33.1, 4; against Porus: 60.2; the Mallian town: 63.3, 4, 7, 9.

[37] There are three references to barbarian costume in c. 45, and another three to dealings with barbarians in c. 47.

over Macedonians provoked Cleitus' protest and the disastrous confrontation which followed (cc. 50-51). Finally, as the end of the life draws to a close, Plutarch reminds us that Alexander almost killed Cassander for laughing at barbarians prostrating themselves before him. Alexander's anger and violence toward Philotas, Cleitus, Callisthenes and others, as well as his defense of barbarian practices, reveal barbarian traits, despite his training with Aristotle. Thus Plutarch sets out the fundamental issue of the life: could Alexander conquer himself as well as the external enemy, that is, could he conquer the barbarian within himself?

*Caesar*

Not so Caesar. In his life, Plutarch's references to *barbaroi* are few, except for the chapters devoted to the Gallic campaigns, *Caes*. 18-26. In contrast to the life of Marius (cf. *Mar*. 11), there is no introductory excursus on the Gallic tribes and their migrations: the introduction in cc. 15-17 to the Gallic wars focuses on Caesar himself. Like Alexander, Caesar battles against *barbaroi*, especially when fighting the Germans (22), but there is not the same suggestion that he takes on barbarian ways. One explanation might be that he had had a thorough training in Greek rhetoric (cf. 3.2); another that his ambition to achieve primacy in Rome did not require accommodation to barbarian practices. In general Caesar portrayed himself, and was regarded, as not given to grudges or revenge. Yet there is a hint of a different character early on. As a young man, Caesar mocks his pirate captors as uncultured barbarians (ἀπαιδεύτους καὶ βαρβάρους, 2.4), who cannot appreciate his literary productions. Released, he returns and crucifies them all (2.7). He fulfills his promise, as Plutarch recognizes. Is this simply quick justice, or a sign of unexpected violence? Suetonius makes Caesar less harsh: he has the pirates' throats sliced first (Suet. *Iul*. 74.1)[38].

Ambition is Caesar's weakness. Barbarian poverty and simplicity give a special poignancy to one anecdote that reveals the depths of that ambition, which Caesar's companions could hardly have appreciated at the time. While passing a tiny, impoverished, barbarian village in the Alps on his way to Spain, his friends mocked the inhabitants' supposed contests for preeminence. Caesar cut through their joking: "I would prefer to be first among these men than to be second among Romans" (11.3-4). In this case Caesar chooses ruling barbarians to being ruled by a Roman. Apocryphal surely, but the anecdote captures the man.

[38] Plutarch omits the revolt of Uxellodunum in 51, when Caesar, confident of his reputation for clemency, decided to chop off the hands of all who had taken arms against him on this occasion (Hirtius, *BG* 8.40).

According to another anecdote, Caesar measured himself not only against his contemporaries, but against Alexander, the supreme achiever: he wept on reading of all the Macedonian had accomplished by his own age (11.5-6)[39]. Caesar, of course, went on to the greatest honors at Rome, and in that very pursuit of honor lay the basis of his downfall. In reporting Caesar's triumph after the Munda campaign, a reference to "barbarian kings" marks a turning point for Plutarch:

> This was Caesar's final war. Nothing distressed the Romans more than the triumph he celebrated. These were not alien leaders or barbarian kings (οὐ ... ἀλλοφύλους ἡγεμόνας οὐδὲ βαρβάρους βασιλεῖς) he had defeated; Caesar had destroyed the sons and the entire family of a man who had been the greatest of the Romans, and who had fallen on misfortune. It was not right to celebrate the nation's disasters like this, nor to preen oneself on a victory whose only possible defence before gods and men was one of necessity (56.8-9, Pelling trans.).

Caesar no longer was a victor over a barbarian foe, but over Roman armies: in the eyes of some at least, he himself had become the feared conqueror.

And yet, Caesar's victories could have a different effect, as Plutarch notes elsewhere. Speaking of the infant prince Juba, who was paraded in an earlier triumph, Plutarch remarks, "his capture was most fortunate, for from being a barbarian and a Nomad, he came to be numbered among the most learned writers" (55.3)[40]. Conquest could be a catalyst for change. Plutarch knew, of course, that Caesar's victories had brought the Gauls into the Greco-Roman world, so that they could share in Hellenic *paideia* and even enter the Roman senate. Moreover, Caesar's victories had paved the way for the monarchy under which he lived.

Alexander had triumphed over a barbarian enemy, but gradually had become more like his defeated opponents, adopting not only oriental dress and ritual abasement, but the short temper and superstition of a tyrant[41]. Caesar showed more self-control than Alexander, and was noted for his clemency. His curse was that his greatest opponents were not the barbarian Gauls, but Roman citizens. The war with the Gauls had demonstrated his incredible gifts as a commander, but had only served as preliminaries for the struggle for power at Rome. Alexander's great rivals had

[39] This sole mention of Alexander in Caesar marks him as the ultimate comparandum, and the two heroes as the outstanding leaders of Greece and Rome respectively.

[40] At *Sert*. 9.10, Plutarch calls him "the most historically minded (ἱστορικώτατος) of all kings"; at *Ant*. 87.2, "the most accomplished (χαριεστάτῳ) of kings."

[41] Cf. Schmidt, 1999, 296-99.

been Darius and the Indian Porus; Caesar's had been Pompey and a large part of the Roman senate. Both leaders were possessed by irresistible ambition. Alexander's tragedy was that he had no more worlds to conquer; Caesar's that in defeating Pompey and his sons, he had defeated his own people. Each had plans to resume their conquests over the barbarians, Alexander taking the southern and western route, Caesar the eastern and northern. For these two restless souls, renewing the struggle against the barbarians, like Odysseus' final quest, promised an open-ended road to glory. But death is the final victor, and neither lived to see those dreams even begun.

*Conclusion*

It is time to return to our initial question: how does Plutarch deal with the resemblances and contrasts involved in pairing two heroes who both fought barbarians? He does not, in fact, generally attempt to draw parallels between Greek and Roman campaigns at all. In *Themistocles* and *Camillus*, he recognizes the epochal significance of the capture of Athens and of Rome by barbarians, and their liberation. Alexander's victories spread Hellenicity across Asia and Egypt; Caesar's brought them to the western Ocean and opened the way to the principate. However, in all three pairs studied here, Plutarch broadens the significance of barbarian contact. The barbarian enemy, the external Other, draws attention to Hellenic traits of freedom, culture, and prudence in his heroes and in their cities. Equally important, and perhaps more surprising, this Other serves to uncover traces of the barbarian in those same heroes and cities. An element of irrationality and passion is always present, even in cities that we may have thought outstanding representatives of Greco-Roman culture.

We may return to my initial example of Pyrrhus, an outlier in several ways. Pyrrhus in Plutarch seems neither fish nor fowl, but oscillates between Greek and barbarian, as Mossman has suggested[42]. The army he meets in Italy is not Greek, but not barbarian either. On his return to Epirus, he takes Gauls into his own army, but then smashes the opposing Gauls who were fighting for Antigonus (*Pyr*. 26.3-9). Yet the Gallic garrison he then leaves at Aegae greedily plunders the tombs of the Macedonian kings (26.11-13), with Pyrrhus' acquiescence. Finally, he is killed fighting in Argos, as if he were a barbarian invader, stunned by a pot thrown by a simple Greek woman

42 MOSSMAN, 2005.

43 To complete the picture, Plutarch reports that Antigonus' son Alcyoneus brought him Pyrrhus' head and threw it as his feet. Antigonus struck his son in anger, and called him cursed and barbaric (ἐναγῆ καὶ βάρβαρον), then wept, remembering the fates of his own grandfather and father, his own family's examples of Fortune's mutability (*Pyr*. 34.8).

defending her husband (34.2-6)[43]. Marius' end seems even worse. In his command against the Cimbri and Teutones, he had displayed exemplary prudence and self-control, training his troops, refusing to be intimidated by barbarian numbers and boasts, and choosing for himself the best moment to fight. His final years show him driven by mad ambition, slaughtering his fellow citizens as the whole state collapses into civil war[44].

The barbarians are external, but also within. As the comic strip character Pogo once said, "We have met the enemy, and he is us"[45]. Plutarch's barbarian comparisons allow him to remind his readers of the overwhelming importance of Hellenic *paideia*, and how difficult it is to behave consistently according to its enlightened principles.

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[44] Note the ironic reference at the end of the life to Plato's prayer of thanks that he had been born a Greek, not a barbarian, *Mar*. 46.1.

[45] Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pogo (comic strip), seen 3 April 2015.

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